

Marshall Garv.

THE QUIETEST GAME IN TOWN.

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would like to locate are: musical charm bracelets, musical key rings, and a music box which plays *Oh, What a Beautiful Morning*. If anyone would like to contact me, they may write to Mrs. Sandra Warren, 2413 NW 14th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73107." \*\*\*

## COOKIE, COOKIE

By Jeri Nold

Here's a good way to keep your cookie jar filled, but if your family likes cookies like my husband does, it won't be full for long. Try the new General Mills's "Big Batch" ready-mix, available in four delicious kinds: chocolate chip, peanut butter, oatmeal, and sugar cookies.

"Big Batch" is packed two pouches in a box, each pouch making three dozen cookies. *Dialogue* received samples of each flavor, and I baked hundreds of cookies that we sold at a Christmas benefit bazaar for *Dialogue*. Not only are they easy to do, but they are every bit as good as any homemade cookies. If I can bake them successfully, anyone can.

The recipe that follows is the same for all flavors:

HEAT oven to 375°. Ingredients: 1 pouch Big Batch cookie mix; 1/4 cup butter or margarine, softened; 1 egg. MIX all ingredients with fork until moist. DROP dough by rounded teaspoonfuls about 2 inches apart onto ungreased cookie sheet. BAKE 8 minutes for chewy cookies, 10 minutes for crisp cookies (do not overbake). COOL 1 minute before removing from cookie sheet.

SIX DOZEN COOKIES: For ease of preparation, prepare 1 pouch Big Batch cookie mix at a time. \*\*\*

## THE QUIETEST GAME IN TOWN

(Editor's Note: The interviews in this article were contributed by Gary Marshall, program director of the Radio Reading Service operated from the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas. Interviews were taken during the 1977 tournament. End of editor's note.)

Cheering, chanting, and encouraging shouts are significant by their absence in a sport originally designed for the blind but whose popularity has extended to sighted players. Indeed this is a quiet game because the players must concentrate on the sounds emitted by a beeping softball and the low hum of a base. Batters and fielders are either blind or blindfolded and rely totally on their sense of hearing to play the game. Therefore, because other participants, and the audience, must remain silent, the game may be termed the quietest game in town.

Beep baseball, the common name for the sport, got its start in 1964 in Colorado Springs, Colorado, when a softball with an audio tone was requested by the principal of a school for the blind. The first use for the ball was planned for preschoolers. The unusual request captivated the interest of the Telephone Pioneers and they soon were able to construct an audio ball. Research and development during the next few years produced a ball durable enough to withstand the repeated impacts of a traditional softball game. Telephone Pioneers throughout the country continue to be the largest source supplying the high-pitched beeping baseball.

Beep baseball is a form of recreation which can be shared by the sighted and the blind. In March of 1976, a national convention was held in Chicago. The National Beep Baseball Association was formed, official rules were written, and plans were made for the first national invitational tournament world series. Minneapolis hosted the first tournament, and eight teams participated. In 1977, Lawrence, Kansas, hosted the second world series of beep baseball.

Beep baseball is quite similar to slow pitch softball, with obvious modifica-



tions for the blind. There are five players who are either blind or blindfolded, a sighted pitcher and catcher, and two-sighted field spotters. The pitcher and catcher play for the offensive team and actually work with the batter in his attempts to hit the ball.

MARSHALL. Frank Sinon is a member of the Chicago team who is playing in the tournament this year. Frank is second vice-president of the organization called the National Beep Baseball Association. In addition, Frank pitches for the Chicago team. Frank, tell us some of the responsibilities of the pitcher and how the responsibilities are involved with the pitcher and catcher.

SINON. The pitcher has the responsibility to put the ball in on a nice level plane and find out where the batter's swing comes across the plate. It varies from batter to batter, and the pitcher must remember each batter's capabilities. If you get a batter that starts uppercutting, or a pitcher who starts dropping a ball off, you're decreasing the possibilities of a ball's being hit. This is because the ball and the bat are not on the same plane for that long of a time. If the ball has an arc to it, it's only cutting the batter's plane one time, and he has only that split second that he can hit it. The pitcher has to work with batters to develop a consistent swing and something they can follow through with and feel comfortable. Part of the problem, when you have someone who has been blind since birth, is that he or she has no concept of how the bat is supposed to be swung, and it's one of the hardest things to explain to someone. The catcher has to give the pitcher a good target so that the ball can be thrown straight to the target. The catcher gives a target at the same spot, but he is back from the plate a few feet. The pitcher attempts to throw straight through to that target.

MARSHALL. We should add that the pitcher and catcher are both sighted and play for the offensive team. They are trying as much as they can to help the batter hit the ball. Also, there are two field spotters. Tell us exactly what they do.

SINON. There are five fielders, so one spotter takes care of three people and the other spotter assists the other two fielders. The spotters are allowed to use just one name and may not give directions such as "in" or "out" or "left" or "right." Calling the one name tips off the others as to where the ball has been hit. This is where team effort gets involved in the game. Before, team effort was lacking in blind sports. Here the game depends on how all members of the team function. If you're playing close and the ball gets past you, other fielders are supposed to back you up and help one another. Since only one name is called, the fielders should head in that direction and help if necessary. The spotter makes his call quickly so fielders are able to move to the correct area.

Only two of the traditional bases are used in beep baseball, and a run is scored simply by reaching base before a fielder has possession of the batted ball. When a ball is hit and travels at least 30 feet, one of the bases is activated and emits a low hum. Each base is located 80 feet from home plate, a sufficient distance to give fielders a fair chance to make the put out. An out is also made after five unsuccessful swings at the ball. Three outs are allowed per each of the six innings of regular play.

In the second and fourth innings, the batter swings at the ball after it is placed upon a batting tee. In most cases, this concession permits batters to make solid contact with the ball. If three outs are not made after the five batters, the play returns to a pitched ball again.

Although the National Beep Baseball Association is merely two years old, the sport is spreading nationwide. Men and women of all ages are participating, and the game, originally designed for the blind, has many sighted players who must wear blindfolds. Larry Johnson of the San Antonio All Stars discusses how the teams were organized in the Texas region.

MARSHALL. Larry, you played an important role in establishing teams in San Antonio and other teams in Texas. Is that correct?

JOHNSON. Yes. We introduced beep baseball to San Antonio and to Texas in July, 1976. With the assistance of the Telephone Pioneers and the San Antonio coun-



cil, in two months' time we readied our first team to come to the national tournament in St. Paul. It was an exhilarating experience. When we returned, we made our principal goal that of spreading the game to Texas. This year we had a three-team league in San Antonio, and we also made some trips, along with other promotional efforts. We have managed to create enough interest that beep baseball will now be played in six cities in the State of Texas by 1978.

The first president of the National Beep Baseball Association was Bill Gibney, now a member of the Phoenix Copperstate Lions team. Gibney explains how he became involved in the game and how the game has been changed during its short life to make it more challenging for everyone.

MARSHALL. Bill, tell us how you became involved in beep baseball and how the National Beep Baseball Association evolved.

GIBNEY. After I graduated from law school, I moved to Washington, D.C., and it was while I was in Washington I heard other cities were playing beepball. I tried to find out if there was any interest in Washington, and there was none. I was very happy in 1974, when I moved to Phoenix, simply because Phoenix had been playing beepball for a couple of years. I always thought of myself as a would-be athlete because I just love sports. I hate sitting on the bench, or being a spectator, or playing in the band. I thought it a great opportunity when I got to Phoenix and got the chance to play. I was a little disappointed in beepball three years ago when I started to play because it was fun to bat, but there was nothing thrilling about fielding. At that time, the partials were not blindfolded, so when a ball was hit the fielders would say, "Let the partial get it." By the same token, you would get up to bat and if you hit a ball 300 feet, a high partial could run and field it just as easy as if he was a sighted person playing regular softball.

MARSHALL. At that time, were totally blind persons playing with partially sighted persons?

GIBNEY. Yes, and it was this type of thing that caused us to adopt some rules that would be uniform for the nation, to make the game equal and interesting. For example, let's blindfold the partials. That also adds another element to beepball, which is allowing sighted people to play. Let's make the game more exciting by allowing the fielders to go anywhere on the field and not restrict them to particular zones. Previously, a fielder could not leave his zone. Let's insert a batting tee, so that harder-hit balls are possible more often. Only two bases are now used and each is 80 feet away so a blind person can stretch those legs and get some good exercise. And the bases are further away to give the defense a better advantage. Those are some reasons why the NBBA was formed.

MARSHALL. Tell us your hopes for the NBBA and how these hopes might be realized.

GIBNEY. I have great hopes. I want the NBBA to be represented in every state in the union. When we adopted the NBBA, we broke it down into eight regions. Now we have teams in only four regions. I want teams in all the regions so that there can be regional playoffs to pick the best teams in the region to go to the world series to represent that region. It will take a long time, perhaps five or ten years.

From the very beginning, the Telephone Pioneers have taken an important role in the design and development of the electronics necessary to produce the audible beepballs. Telephone Pioneer Bob Timothy of Denver, Colorado, was interviewed in Lawrence, Kansas, during the second annual world series.

MARSHALL. Who are the Telephone Pioneers, and what do they do?

TIMOTHY. It's a 65-year-old organization with 500,000 members who have 18 or more years' service in the telephone business. It also includes those who are retired. Its primary aim is one of community service. There are over 20,000 people involved with community service projects, and most of the work is with people who are less fortunate. This might include deaf or blind persons or, possibly, the aged. We feel it's an organization of wonderful people doing wonderful work.

MARSHALL. How did the Pioneers become involved with beep baseball?



TIMOTHY. The first idea for a beepball came from some people in Colorado Springs, Colorado, working with a school for the handicapped. A young woman, whom I hired, thought there must be a way to make a ball audible enough so a blind person could use it. It was then developed over years with help from the Bell Telephone Laboratory and other organizations, each having contributing ideas. The game of beep baseball was developed by people putting different inputs together. Today it's a game of specific rules, and it's amazing that we today have teams coming together in Lawrence, Kansas, for the world series of beep baseball. \*\*\*

## BUYER ADVICE AT FLORAL SHOPS

Reprinted from the *Chicago Tribune's* Consumer Watch, a Column by Christine Winter, September 11, 1977.

SEEDS of caution: A quick glance down the plant aisle of any store, whether it's a discount store, a grocery store, or a floral shop, shows that the greening of indoor America has become a big business indeed. Only pets have been accessorized to a greater extent, it appears, as special light and moisture meters, and watering devices, vie with a profusion of pots, hangers, fertilizers, and insecticides in an effort to make the most of the "green thumb" dollar.

Consumers have been getting warnings for some time about the bad habits that have crept into the plant and flower business, which has strayed far from the domain of florists. Sometimes cuttings are clipped, stuck in soil, and sold as full plants. Other plants are "forced" to grow big before they're ready to bring in fast sales. Experts advise checking to make sure roots have kept up and developed with the rest of the plant. Another problem occurs when indoor plants are grown outside in unsterilized soil, instead of in a greenhouse, and they pick up pests and weeds that can spread to other indoor plants when they are brought home.

Now, *Consumer Reports* magazine concludes that consumers ought to think twice about the gadgets that are sprouting up on plant store shelves. In its September issue, the consumer product-testing journal states that ordinary fluorescent lights are the least expensive choice for promoting the best growth--at a half or a third the cost of special lamps. Consumers Union (CU) judged the four light meters it tested as "all disappointing, and of little or no value to the indoor gardener."

It further concluded that moisture meters are "no more useful than feeling the soil with your fingers," and added that repeated poking in the pot with the probes could damage roots.

When it comes to automatic watering devices, CU cited problems of uneven watering from some kinds, and adds that plants could suffer from the loss of personal inspections and attention they get from frequent individual waterings by hand. For vacationers, the report suggested plastic bags over each plant.

The Federal Trade Commission's investigation on the need for care labels on plants got more involved in the hazards of poisonous plants than the need to inform consumers of what they were buying and how to care for it--it has been passed over to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. \*\*\*

## CRÊPES SUZETTE, ANYONE? BLIND GOURMETS SERVE AS TEACHING MODELS

A Free-Lance Article by Margaret Freer, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

In a seminar designed to build understanding between blind diners and those who serve them, eight Wisconsin personalities were invited to test the Magic Pan restaurant's Braille menus and to taste their delectable crêpes.

Crêpes are a current pancake craze of French origin and may run from enticing entrées to tempting desserts called crêpes suzette. The east-town Milwaukee Magic



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